

Satr-i Awrat And Women's Covering (Part I)



Those parts of a responsible person's body which are haram [1] for him (or her) to open and show others and for others to look at while during salat, or any time, are called Awrat [2] parts. Men and women were commanded to cover their awrat parts through the suras [3] of Ahzab and Nur, which were revealed in the third year of the Hegira [4]. In Hanafi and Shafi'i Madhhabs [5] a man's awrat parts for salat are between his navel and lower parts of his knees. The knees are awrat in Hanafi and the navel is awrat in Shafi'i. The salat performed with these parts open is not acceptable. When performing the salat, it is sunnat [6] for men to cover their other parts [arms, head], [and to wear socks if a long robe or a gown is not available]. It is mekruh [7] for them to perform the salat with these parts exposed.

All parts of free women, except their palms and faces, including their wrists, outer parts of their hands, hanging parts of their hair and under their feet are awrat for salat, in Hanafi. There are also valuable books saying that outer parts of hands are not awrat. According to them, it is permissible for women to perform salat while outer parts of their hands up to wrists are bare. But, for having followed all the books, it is better for women to perform salat wearing a gown with sleeves long enough, or a head cover large enough, to cover their hands. There are (savants) who said that women's feet were not awrat in salat, but those same savants said that it was sunnat to cover and mekruh to open them when performing salat and when going out. If one-fourth of a man's or woman's awrat part remains bare as long as one rukn [7], the salat becomes annulled. If a smaller part remains exposed, the salat does not become nullified, but it becomes mekruh. In Shafi'i, a woman's whole body is awrat all the time other than her two hands and her face.

GLOSSARY

[1] **haram:** an action, word or thought prohibited by Allahu ta'ala.

[2] **awrat** private parts, genitals.

[3] **suura(t):** a Qur'anic chapter [a chapter of the Qur'an].

[4] **Hegira:** emigration of the Prophet ('alaihi 's-salam) from Mekka to Medina; al-Hijra.

[5] **madhhab:** all of what a profound 'alim of (especially) Fiqh (usually one of the four-Hanafi, Shafi'i, Maliki, Hanbali) or iman (one of the two, namely Ash-ari, Maturidi) communicated.

[6] **sunnat:** i) act, thing that was, though not commanded by Allahu ta'ala, done and liked by the Prophet ('alaihi 's-salam) as an 'ibada (there is thawab if done, but no sin if omitted, yet it causes sin if continually omitted and disbelief if disliked; the Sunna; i) (with fard) all the sunnas as a whole; ii) (with the Book or Qur'an al-karim) the Hadith ash-sharif; iii) (alone) fiqh, Islam.

[7] **rukn** The fards in namaz are called rukn. Recitation of an ayat, the ruku', the two sajdas and sitting in the last rak'at are each a rukn.